

Holland Cup 2022 Review 30th May 2022

New century Taekwondo recently had 5 students attend their first international taekwondo competition overseas as part of PUMA squad and what a fantastic weekend it was. Here's a quick overview of the competition and weekend to hopefully inspire others and show that all the hard work really does pay off.

The Holland Cup has been a regular competition on the PUMA calendar but for the last few years, due to the Covid pandemic, it had obviously been put on hold. It's held on the outskirts of Delft, a lovely little city in the Netherlands not too far from Amsterdam and Rotterdam. As newbies travelling abroad with the PUMA squad we didn't know what to expect but all I can say is that the organising behind the scenes, before the event was brilliant and we couldn't wait to be there.

Everyone is responsible for their own travel arrangements so a group of us had booked flights from East Midlands Airport to Amsterdam and then a short train transfer to Delft, this had all been planned to get us to the weigh in on the Saturday evening before the competition on the Sunday but due to some travel disruptions at the airport we only just managed to get the weigh in on time. It wouldn't have been a major problem if we hadn't but it helped relax the competitors for the evening.

After a few drinks at the hotel bar, a McDonalds walkthrough (another story) and a good sleep it was competition time!

Competition day started with a quick breakfast and then a squad meetup at 7:35am to make sure everyone was ready and raring to go. We made sure that all the competitors and coaches got to the venue first and then some of the parents did a few extra shuttle runs in their cars to get the remaining parents to venue in time for the start.

What an opening it was, with all the umpires being clapped into the competition area and the competitors lined up together in their teams made the atmosphere electric and you could feel your heartbeat pumping as the tension was rising. It was brilliant and you knew it was going to be a special day no matter what the result.

With a team of 20 athletes, with the majority taking part in both the sparring and pattern divisions you can imagine it was a busy day but here's a rundown of what I can remember of the NCTKD performances.

First up was the Junior 14-17 years male 1st degree patterns which included three of the five new century students in a large pool of thirteen athletes. Each round would consist of two designated patterns, out of twelve, chosen by the officials. Dom was up first with a great performance but it wasn't to be his day and he lost out to the bronze medal winner. Olly was up next with a couple of great patterns but unluckily for him he was up against the gold medallist. Finally, it was Iden's turn on the mats and he ended up with two 1st degree patterns, his first pattern was really good but a couple of mistakes on the 2nd one put him out of the comp against the eventual silver medallist. Overall, they did themselves proud with some fantastic patterns against some strong competition.

Next up was the 14-17 years male 2nd-3rd degree patterns which included Josh. It was the same format as above but with a smaller pool of competitors which resulted in each competitor facing off against each other. Josh, who had only recently learnt all of his new degree patterns, started a little hesitant but he soon got back to his normal self and performed some solid patterns and came away with the bronze medal.

Iden was back on the mats straight after the patterns division in the junior 14-17 years male 1st to 3rd degree -56 kg sparring division, this is where the tension shoots up for most parents as these sparring divisions are of a very high standard and are highly competitive. Each round consisted of two fights of two minutes with a one minute break in between. These two minute rounds can seem like an age when you are competing and the adrenalin can zap your energy levels pretty quick. Iden's first competitor was from the Netherlands and he started moving around the ring well but it didn't take Iden long to take control and leave his mark. He then came up against a slightly taller opponent who used his range advantage well and seemed to have a good first round but Iden came back well and made it a very close fight that was hard to call as a spectator. Unluckily the result didn't go Iden's way but he had done enough to get into the bronze medal play off. This was another two rounds of tense action and Iden was looking like the clear winner, his adrenalin was pumping so much that he hadn't even noticed he had seriously sprained his big toe. Time was up and Iden had won the bronze medal.

Next it was Faye's turn in the Junior 14-17 years female 4th to 1st kup patterns, another large pool with a few Puma Squad members in this division. Faye was designated pattern Won-Hyo and started strongly but it wasn't enough to give her the edge against a fantastic competitor from Germany who I think was the eventual winner and soon to be her nemesis as we will see in the sparring section later.

Back to sparring now for Dom in the junior 14-17 years male 1st to 3rd degree -75 kg sparring division. Dom had decided to move up a weight division and was at the lower end of it. He came up against a strong competitor who ended up winning the gold medal and whilst Dom had a great spar and used the ring well it just wasn't enough to gain the advantage. However he still had the chance to win Bronze in the third/forth place decider match. Dom had two great rounds of sparring using his hands and movement really well and he managed to tire his opponent out. Another great result for NCTKD and PUMA squad.

Josh was up next in the junior 14-17 years male 1st to 3rd -68 kg sparring division, with what had seemed like a very long wait he was finally up on the mats but same again he was up against a strong opponent and put in another really great performance with some nice combinations and movement but the result didn't go his way and again it went to the eventual winner. Again we had another two rounds for the bronze medal, Josh performed really well and from the distance I thought he'd just done enough but it wasn't to be and unluckily he came fourth.

It was now Faye's turn to let her competitors know about her strong lightning fast side kick - I've felt it so I know what it's like. Faye had also moved up a division and was in the junior 14-17 years female -60kg sparring division. Her first round was up against a girl from Norway who moved really well but once she was caught by one of those side kicks she knew about it and decided to keep her distance. This allowed Faye to grow in confidence and she won both rounds easily. Onto the final and Faye came up against the German girl who had knocked her out of the pattern division. Faye started really strong but her opponent was stronger and kept coming forward and putting the pressure on. It was a little too much and in the end the it wasn't to be and Faye had to settle for a fantastic silver medal.

That was the end of our NCTKD students competing but there were still other squad members yet to compete and it was great to see all of the PUMA squad members supporting each other. The final events of the day were the overall divisions where the 1st and 2nd place degree grade competitors battled it out. While all of these were fabulous displays of Taekwondo it was the the final couple of events that showed Taekwondo at its absolute best, two world champions performing at their peak. Sean O'Neil and Ariella Figueroa go and check them out on YouTube, hopefully it will inspire everyone who watched to aspire and perform in the same way

Overall, it was a fantastic achievement by all of the NCTKD and PUMA squad members. I'm proud of every single one of them and really pleased to be able to share the experience with them. It really shows that if you want it enough and have the time and support you can really reach these high levels of competition and feel what a buzz it gives you.

Once the comp was over it was back to the hotel, a quick refresh and out for a lovely meal in Delft with all the coaches, competitors and parents. It was great to see the friendships developing and the team bonding together. I reckon all the parents will feel the same about the whole weekend.

There's loads more I could write about but I've concentrated on the NCTKD students and I hope there's another writeup that covers all the other squad members in more detail. I'll finish by saying a big thanks to everyone who helped organise the event, the PUMA coaches, PUMA captains, athletes, parents and NCTKD instructors and students that have helped them all on their journey to this event.

Here's the full list of PUMA squad medalists.

Categories	Rank	Name
Tul Youth 6-13 F A D01-D02	2	Lockley Megan
Tul Youth 6-13 M A D01-D02	1	Brown Jake
Tul Youth 6-13 M C G06-G05	3	Price Kinley
Tul Junior 14-17 F A D02-D03	1	Mohan Singh Ellie
Tul Junior 14-17 M A D02-D03	3	Williams Joshua
Tul Senior-Veteran 18+ F A D01	2	Hodson Isobel
Tul Senior-Veteran 18+ M A D04-D06	3	Colman-Roberts Edward
Tul Senior-Veteran 18+ M A D02	3	Bailey Aidan
Sparring Youth 6-13 F A D01-D02 +150cm	2	Lockley Megan
Sparring Youth 6-13 M A D01-D02 +165 cm	1	Brown Jake
Sparring Junior 14-17 F B G04-G01 -50 kg	1	Hooper Holly
Sparring Junior 14-17 F B G04-G01 -60 kg	2	Hubbuck Faye
Sparring Junior 14-17 M A D01-D03 -56 kg	3	Hubbuck Iden
Sparring Junior 14-17 M A D01-D03 -75 kg	3	Melluish Domonic
Sparring Senior 18+ M A D01-D06 +85 kg	2	Colman-Roberts Edward
Sparring Veteran 35+ M A+B G04-D07 +70 kg	3	Law Andrew
OVERALL Tul Junior 14-17 M&F A D01-04	3	Mohan Singh Ellie

Taekwon

Dale Hubbuck 3rd Degree